

11/21 3:26 AM - Met with the NATO Training mission Afghanistan at Camp Eggers. Staff under the commander spoke of the efforts within this command. The Combined Security Transition Command Afghanistan is a multinational and multifunctional effort with trainers, instructors, educators and advisors for the Afghan forces. 95% of the money spent in this command is from the U.S. This effort is working with non-governmental and international organizations. Afghan forces have the lead for security in Kabul. All security in Kabul is under Afghan control and staffing.

11/21/2010 8:47 AM - We got an update on Village Stabilization Operations throughout Afghanistan. These efforts look to coordinate the "build" efforts of the COIN strategy, and are coordinated to assure that resources are being used properly and that there is a minimal amount of repetition of services and an assurance that resources are being used to the maximum utility.

11/21/2010 - We are meeting with the Deputy Minister for Security Affairs, Chief of Staff of the Minister of Security Affairs and we had several interpreters. The Interior Ministry affairs were discussed. The Deputy Minister spoke about the efforts of the Afghan police including terrorism, drugs and organized crime. The issues have been about the capacity they have to address all of these issues. The new Minister of the Interior is working on the re-established priorities for the Afghan Security Forces including- education and training, fighting corruption, changing the structure of leadership, support and redirection in leadership. The creation of Afghan local police to supplement the Afghan National Police are part of the total security efforts for the country. The efforts of fighting terrorism and regular law enforcement are an important part of the internal security issues as pointed out by the Deputy Minister. You could tell by the emphasis of the Deputy Minister that he was very enthusiastic about the advancement of the efforts of the police force and that they are working very hard to improve the entire system of policing. The Deputy Minister for Policy and Strategy has laid out an Afghan National Police Strategic Plan. This plan includes strengthening their capabilities, assuring they can perform their duties, fighting corruption. Fighting corruption, he said, is the most important part of their efforts to improve and it is that which will improve the confidence of the citizens in the police force. They measure progress by achievements in the number of arrests and reduction in crime and then looking at the number of cases brought to court and successfully prosecuted. They have adopted a counter corruption effort and are evaluating its effectiveness. They are emphasizing the development of leadership skills within the management structure of their organization. The Interior Minister is trying to split the efforts of the political section and policy sections so that issues do not get politicized. The 134,000 police force will not be enough to address the country's security issues so they will need more in the future. There has been an increased effort of support for the Afghan Police Force which is an improvement over the past. They are focusing on creating more capacity in their force structure.

There are five types of police – law enforcement, border, Afghan national order police (elite police force), counter crime, terrorism and intelligence and public protection force. These elements all need the efforts to improve training and the border police need more weaponry and advanced intelligence gathering capability. The Afghan Security Force must be ready to take over all security by 2014 according to the Deputy Interior Minister. Their assessments indicate that they will be able to assume charge of the police force and maintain order by 2014.

The Interior Minister has divided the 366 districts in the 34 provinces into two areas of efforts for the police forces. The results are that they are able to better manage the challenges they face. Police of Afghanistan are the immediate face of the central government and have been successful in making people feel more safe.

Low unemployment and a high quality education system they say is critical to the level of security and crime. The support of the U.S. and the international community is critical to Afghanistan maintaining a quality security force in the future. The Deputy Ministers expressed deep appreciation of the sacrifices of the men and women in uniform from the U.S. who have served and given all in Afghanistan.

11/21/2010 8:00 AM - We flew by helicopter to Bagram Air Force Base and met with the Special Operations Task Force command staff. We received an overview of efforts to coordinate special operations. This group works with Afghanistan and U.S. forces to destroy enemy networks by integrating information gathered from multiple sources. They work in conjunction with Afghan units to assure that they are recognizing all of the proper cultural issues with the Afghan government and military commands.

11/21/2010 8:58 AM - Met with Major General John Campbell – Commander of the 101st Airborne Division and Commander of Regional Command East. He explained the operations that they are currently undertaking in the region and also how he has been pursuing the fight. He spoke about some of the challenges he faces including the Pakistani Taliban. He was very upbeat about the successes that they have achieved but also acknowledged that there are a number of things left to do in order to degrade the Taliban's capabilities to the point where the Afghanistan Armed Forces can take over.

11/21/2010 - Flew by helicopter back to Kabul and met with Lieutenant General Rodriguez. The topic of discussion was how he sees the efforts undertaken by ISAF Joint Command. He described the strategic viewpoints of the Afghans and described operations and where the Afghanistan Influence Networks are currently operating. He identified the change in power in the lower house of the Afghan Parliament and what that might mean in this insurgency effort. The Pashtuns are the majority of the insurgency but they are underrepresented by the results of the elections. This transition of no representation from the center of the country will create a challenge for the government. There was a discussion about how the media around the world addresses where we are in trying to defeat the Taliban. The U.S. media is said to focus on the point in effort towards defeating the Taliban and the European media focuses on more of the country operations and less about military achievements. General Rodriguez spoke about needing the dollars to spend in areas to provide governance and also resources to help fix damages from the conflict. The concept is that in order for the conflict to end and for the counterinsurgency to be less successful there will be a need for reintegration of the insurgent population. This reintegration can take place by negotiation or by the combatants just tiring and stopping the fight.

11/21/2010 11:55 PM - We have left to travel to the Embassy compound. We will take a few minutes to say hello to U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan, Karl Eikenberry. We will leave the

compound early tomorrow morning to travel to Kabul airport to fly to Regional Command Southwest in Helmand Province. Ambassador Eikenberry took the time to give us his account of his meeting at the peace talks in Lisbon with the international community in relation to operations in Afghanistan. He was there with the U.S. representatives and President Karzai. He gave us his account of how he views the international support for operations in Afghanistan.

11/22/2010 8:45 AM - We had a breakfast briefing to get an assessment from State Department personnel on the current state of affairs and operations in Afghanistan concerning the Taliban and the impact of Pakistan on these ops.

11/22/2010 12:32 am We have flown from Kabul to Camp Leatherneck in Helmand Province to Regional Command Southwest. Upon arrival we met General Mills and his staff. We then proceeded to get a briefing on the operations within this regional command and to understand what has been accomplished, what areas are secure and what is left to be accomplished and what areas are yet to be secured. The briefing started with an intelligence update. One leader spoke about the current efforts in drug interdiction and that the poppy crop this year suffered from blight for a variety of reasons, including poppy being planted in less desirable soil because farmers are planting other crops in the better soil. This has been due to the direction and advice of the PRT's. The Afghan Local Police (ALP) have been very active in drug interdiction and eradication. The U.S. forces are also involved in interdiction but not eradication.

General Mills and his staff described the winter campaign and noted that the Taliban has traditionally ramped down their operations in the winter and up in the spring. The Marines in RC Southwest are going to keep up the fight in the region throughout the winter. The areas in RC Southwest where there has been a lessening of Taliban resistance and presence has greatly increased over the past year and those areas left to secure are the ones the Marines will be focused on for this winter. The presence of the Taliban in RC Southwest has been significantly weakened. General Mills also described what he believes is needed from the Afghan National Army and the Afghan Police Force. Both forces need to have more consistency and reliability. They have gotten much better but General Mills believes that they are a ways away from gaining the realm of operational capability they need to maintain order on their own.

Next the commander for Stability Operations Colonel Lebidine described how governance is being re-established in districts throughout Helmand. These efforts at governance include an effort of reintegration of the Taliban, advancing education through increasing opportunities in areas like vocational education. He also spoke about development efforts in the Province including agricultural advancements, infrastructure expansion, long-term business opportunities and sustainability efforts.

General Mills also described the need and opportunities in the CERP (Commander's Emergency Response Program). The active program dollars expended in Helmand this past year totaled \$22 million and \$67 million spent in total on projects in Afghanistan. The U.S. AID expenditures in 2010 throughout Afghanistan were \$159 million. There has been great coordination of efforts in Helmand with the Governor of the Province – Governor Mangal.

After the briefing we went to the Mess Hall for the highlight of our time at Leatherneck to meet 17 great Marines from Virginia. I had a chance to speak to all of them to learn a little about where they live in Virginia, where they went to high school, where they live now and what they do in the Marine Corps. I had the chance to share some great time and learn more about a number of these great Marines. One was from Williamsburg and he goes to Williamsburg Community Chapel where I worshipped the week before. I will be contacting all of the families of these great Marines to thank them for their support for our great nation.

11/21/2010 3:35 AM - We next flew in CH-53 Super Stallion Marine Corps helicopters to the 2nd Battalion 1st Marines in HLZ Garmsir. This unit is commanded by Colonel Dave Furness, former Director of the House Marine Corps liaison office on Capitol Hill. We visited the command on the base and had a briefing on the operations throughout Garmsir both in the past and today's operations. Marines 2-1 have just taken over in September for the previous Marine unit. We then walked through the bazaar areas in Garmsir, stopped and spoke with some merchants through an interpreter then and met with the Governor of the district and the tribal elders. The interpreters helped with the speeches from both the CODEL Members and the Governor and village elders. It was a great experience to see a region that had been secured and is being rebuilt. The shops are working as well as the population from selling fuel to fabrics they are truly transacting business under the realm of security. I had a great conversation with one of the Afghan tribal leaders in English. He thanked the United States and also wanted to emphasize how important economic growth is for his country. He especially emphasized that tourism could be an avenue of economic growth.

We then walked back to the Marine Corps 2nd Division compound and met with two Marines from Virginia. I had a chance to speak with them about their combat efforts in Garmsir and about their Marine Corps service, their families and where in Virginia they are from. We then flew in CH-53's back to Kabul and then from Kabul in a C-20 to Dubai.

11/22/2010 7:45 PM - We boarded a flight to Dulles.